

**Ambassador Michael S. Hoza's Remarks  
At the Fourth of July Reception  
U.S. Embassy Yaounde, Cameroon  
June 30, 2016**

Good evening, thank you very much . . .

Your Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Relations Lejeune Mbella Mbella;

Your Excellencies, the Vice Prime Minister, and Ministers

Members of the Senate and National Assembly;

Your Royal Highnesses, revered traditional chiefs;

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Heads of International Organizations and members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Religious leaders;

Military leaders;

Members of the media;

Friends and colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

*(Image: Statue of Liberty with Fireworks)*

Welcome to the celebration of the 240<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of the United States of America.



In November of this year, America will hold its 57<sup>th</sup> Presidential election. Over 218 million American citizens, every man and woman aged 18 and up, will have the right to vote, and their vote will select the chief executive of our country . . . peacefully.

Ainsi, aujourd'hui nous célébrons non seulement notre indépendance, mais la démocratie elle-même. Comme vous l'avez vu en entrant, le thème de la célébration de ce soir est notre élection présidentielle, la marque de notre démocratie depuis plus de deux siècles.

***(Image: the Greek Acropolis in Athens)***

They tell us that democracy started over 2,500 years ago, in Athens, where for the first time representative government of, by and for the people was established. It



was in 507 B.C. that the Athenians came up with a government of three branches, executive, legislative and judiciary, that provided both citizen participation and checks and balances on power.

Unfortunately, it did not last long.

***(Image: Barbarians burning Rome)***

Depuis plus de mille ans, la démocratie a essentiellement disparu, et le pouvoir était entre les mains des empereurs, des



seigneurs de la guerre et des rois héréditaires. Les Ages Sombres ont apporté la misère, l'esclavage, la souffrance, la maladie et la concentration de la richesse entre les mains d'un petit nombre.

***(Image: Washington Crossing the Delaware)***

However, in 1776, subjects of the British King in the American colonies declared their independence. In that declaration, the American



Founding Fathers returned to the democratic traditions of Athens when they wrote:

***“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”***

And Voila! Democracy was reborn.

Not quite! In fact, not by a long shot.

American democracy was a work in progress right from the very start.

It took eleven years to draft and adopt our Constitution, which, like the Athenian model, established checks and balances between the three branches of government, the executive, the legislative and the independent judiciary.

*(Image: the Bill of Rights)*

No sooner was the Constitution adopted when it was immediately amended, because the Founding Fathers forgot to include the all-important issue of human rights. The



first ten amendments guaranteed freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, the right to a fair trial, and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

It sounds like the Founding Fathers did a marvelously complete job, until we get to the first Presidential election in 1788.

*(Image: George Washington)*

Dans les conditions de cette première élection en 1788, c'est un fait que la majorité du personnel américain et leurs membres de famille à cette ambassade, n'auraient pas été autorisés à voter.



*(Image: Ambassador Hoza photo)*

I myself would have been denied the right to vote, because I do not own land. The requirement to own land would not be eliminated until 1828.



***(Image: Hillary Clinton)***

None of the women would have been allowed to vote. It would be another one hundred and thirty two years before women in America would have the right to vote, with the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 1920.



***(Image: Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima)***

Beaucoup de nos militaires n'auraient pas été autorisés à voter, parce qu'ils ont moins de 21 ans. Il a fallu attendre 1971, après un débat sur la guerre du Vietnam, pour que le 26<sup>e</sup> Amendement soit adopté, abaissant l'âge de vote à 18 ans.





*(Image: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)*

None of my African American colleagues would have been allowed to vote. They would suffer under slavery for another 77 years. Slavery



would be abolished following our terrible Civil War, but African Americans would continue to be disenfranchised for another hundred years! It was not until the Civil Rights Movement and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1964 that African Americans would have the same right to vote as any other American citizen.

*(Image: President Barack Obama)*

And it was not until 2008, another 44 years after the Voting Rights Act, that an African American was elected President, and the American democratic journey finally upheld the promise of





the Founding Fathers, that “all men are created equal.”

Et cela a marqué 240 ans du voyage démocratique américain. Imparfait, déficient, mais en constante amélioration, et toujours guidé par des valeurs profondes et des principes essentiels.

Similarly, America’s foreign policy has evolved over 240 years. Today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, American foreign policy is guided by deeply held values and critical principles.

*(Image: Americans soldiers with Cameroonians)*

We have partnered with Cameroon to defeat the violent extremism of the Islamic State – West Africa, Boko Haram.



*(Image: Cameroonian peacekeepers)*

We have partnered with Cameroon to provide peacekeepers to the United Nations, to bring stability back to the suffering people of the Central African Republic



*(Image: Cameroonian patrol boats)*

We have partnered with Cameroon to defeat pirates in the Gulf of Guinea.



***(Image: Deputy Chief of Mission Smith and Cameroonian Doctor)***

We have partnered with Cameroon to fight infectious disease, to eradicate polio, to defeat HIV/AIDS,



***(Image: CDC Director Dr. Bolu administering a vaccine)***

to build health sector capacity to prevent, detect and respond to virulent pandemics like Ebola or Avian Bird Flu, and to take on the scourge of malaria.



***(Image: YALI's with President Obama)***

We have sponsored people to people programs that have brought Fulbright scholars, International Visitors, and



Young African Leaders to America, each of them representing a beautiful thread in the fabric of our bilateral relationship.



*(Image: Peace Corps Volunteers in the field)*

We have partnered with Cameroonians at all levels to sustain the engagement of Peace Corps Volunteers engaging their new families in a vibrant cultural exchange.





***(Image: Bob Taylor working with his Crelicam colleagues)***

We promote private sector investment in Cameroon, like Taylor Guitars and Crelicam, who bring world class technology, create jobs for



Cameroonians, and responsibly harvest the riches of Cameroon's wonderful forests.

***(Image: Bob Taylor's guitars)***

Crelicam supplies Cameroonian ebony to all of the finest guitar makers in the world, and Bob Taylor has partnered with the University of Yaounde and



UCLA to begin a program that will plant more ebony than Crelicam cuts down! That is American corporate social responsibility.

Why do we strive to perfect our democracy? Why do we pursue a foreign policy guided by values? Why do we partner with Cameroon?

*(Image: PAO Quiroz with Cameroonian children)*

Because we recognize that we, all seven billion of us on this planet, are indeed created equal, and that we are all increasingly interconnected and inextricably interdependent for



everything, our security, our health, our prosperity, even the air we breathe and the water we drink.

*(Image: Dev. Coordinator Barone with Cameroonian children)*

Le peuple camerounais a été sur un voyage beaucoup plus longtemps que celui des américains.



*(Image: CAO Schultz in Garoua)*

Si l'indépendance en termes d'un Etat-nation moderne est née seulement en 1960, la culture et l'histoire du Cameroun remontent à plusieurs centaines d'années.



*(Image: Alice Nkom and PE Chief Brownstein)*

Today, the people of America and the people of Cameroon, find ourselves together, facing the complex problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.





*(Image: DCM Smith with Cameroonians)*

We, the American and Cameroonian  
members of the U.S. Embassy in  
Yaounde, are here to work with all  
Cameroonians,



*(Image: CAO Schultz hugging*

*Cameroonian schoolgirl)*

men, women, children,



*(Image: PAO Quiroz with*

*Cameroonians)*

soldiers, doctors, lawyers,



*(Image: EBO Director Wilson with schoolchildren)*

traditional chiefs, religious leaders,  
farmers, entrepreneurs, artists and sports  
stars,



*(Image: Ambassador in Bafut)*

to build a brighter future for both our  
peoples.



*(Image: back to the Statue of Liberty and fireworks)*

and so tonight, join us to celebrate.  
We will be serving food from across  
the regions of America, and we will



be dancing to two great musical groups, Jazz Ambassador Bobby Ricketts with the Kemit 7 Band, and one of my favorite Cameroonian super star bands, X-Maleya!

So, to kick off the party, please join me in a toast to the continued partnership of Cameroon and the United States of America, for continued strong ties of friendship between our people, and for a bright future of peace and prosperity.

On est ensemble.